

NATIONAL CANNERS ASSOCIATION



Information Letter



FOR N. C. A. MEMBERS

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Canned Food Completely Exonerated in Food Poisoning Case

Readiness of newspapers to hold canned foods responsible for illnesses due to unknown causes, suppression of facts by a member of the family involved, and a statement which was accredited to a hospital pathologist and which he emphatically denies having made, all combined to give canned foods damaging and entirely undeserved publicity the week of August 6th in New York and Jersey City newspapers.

On August 6th a Jersey City evening paper published a story of the deaths of two children in the City Hospital, ascribing the deaths to tainted canned milk. The morning papers of August 7th in both New York and Jersey City carried similar stories and the issues of August 8 laid the blame on canned milk or canned peaches.

An investigation was started by the National Canners Association immediately upon receipt of the newspaper report, and the health authorities of Jersey City made a complete and thorough investigation, as the result of which the chief of the Food and Drug Division of the Jersey City Board of Health found the deaths to be due to contaminated roast pork held unrefrigerated for a period of 24 hours in hot weather.

The published stories were based largely on statements made, or reported to have been made, by the eldest son of the family, the pathologist of the hospital in which the two children died, information furnished by the police department, and a

statement by the mother of the children that canned peaches had been eaten by the family.

Determination of the actual cause of the illnesses and deaths was impeded by the action of the eldest son of the family, who suppressed the fact of his own illness, and did not mention the eating of the pork, in order to protect his financee who, he thought, might be held responsible for the poisoning because she had given the cooked pork to his family for Sunday supper.

In the newspaper stories, canned foods were blamed partly because it was ascertained they had been used at the time of the illnesses, and partly because of a statement reported to have been made by the pathologist of the City Hospital that the deaths were due to canned food and that he would urge criminal action against the retailers and packers. The pathologist emphatically denies having made such a statement, and asserts that he simply told the reporters that the trouble might have come from food.

That canned foods were in no way involved in the illnesses is proved by the following facts developed in the investigation:

Evaporated milk was regularly used by the family, the last can being bought on July 31 and used on that day and the following. Despite the fact that this can remained open several days without ice, the culture from it showed no *Bacillus enteritidis*, which caused the deaths. Cultures from intestinal contents of the two children who died both proved positive for this organism, which fact excludes the milk as the causative agent.

Canned peaches were bought on August 1st and served for supper the same day after being freshly opened. Two children were away and did not eat any. Three of the people in the family were already ill at that time. The two children who did not eat the canned peaches were afterwards taken ill.

The story was "played up" by some papers more than others. To the credit of the newspaper first reporting the case, it gave equally prominent position and space to an announcement of the findings of the Board of Health, which held canned foods blameless. None of the papers, however, were content to await the results of an investigation by competent authorities before giving publicity to views and opinions detrimental to canned foods. The facts are being placed before the newspapers carrying the stories, with a request that, in the spirit of fairness and accuracy which they profess to follow, these facts be published and thus remedy, to the small degree possible by a belated correction, the damage they have done the canning industry.

Forecasts of Bean, Corn and Tomato Crops

The crop of sweet corn for canning, according to a forecast issued August 15 by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, is estimated at 741,200 tons, as compared with 399,000 tons in 1927. Tomatoes for canning are estimated at 1,107,500 tons, compared with 1,131,000 tons in 1927. The crop of snap beans for canning is estimated at 96,400 tons, compared with 45,300 in 1927. The following tables give the acreage and production figures, by States:

SNAP BEANS

State	Acreage		Production	
	Estimated		Forecast	
	1927 Acres	1928 Acres	1927 Tons	1928 Tons
Arkansas	880	1,790	1,700	3,800
California	450	480	2,000	2,200
Colorado	840	1,020	1,600	3,700
Delaware	400	670	600	1,700
Indiana	850	1,800	2,000	3,800
Louisiana	2,100	2,150	1,900	1,500
Maine	400	970	1,400	2,400
Maryland	3,300	4,360	8,900	10,900
Michigan	2,400	2,950	2,200	8,000
Mississippi	1,780	1,690	2,700	2,900
New York	5,530	6,340	7,700	17,100
Oregon	650	940	1,600	3,600
Pennsylvania	890	1,060	1,400	2,300
South Carolina	700	970	1,000	2,100
Tennessee	1,230	1,220	1,800	3,000
Utah	880	1,430	2,400	4,700
Washington	570	850	1,000	3,000
Wisconsin	3,910	4,850	5,100	13,100
Other States	1,540	2,850	2,200	6,600
Total	29,320	38,890	45,300	96,400

CORN

State	Acreage		Production	
	Estimated		Forecast	
	1927 Acres	1928 Acres	1927 Tons	1928 Tons
Delaware	3,500	4,060	3,400	8,500
Illinois	40,650	54,880	81,300	142,700
Indiana	17,910	27,390	23,800	68,500
Iowa	26,760	39,860	61,500	111,600
Maine	8,250	11,970	23,100	34,700
Maryland	27,500	30,800	49,500	77,000
Michigan	9,400	8,930	14,100	19,600
Minnesota	15,500	28,340	33,300	63,400
Nebraska	4,600	5,470	11,500	15,300
New Hampshire	780	1,290	1,800	3,100
New York	20,290	32,060	32,500	73,700
Ohio	15,730	27,910	30,000	68,600
Pennsylvania	2,800	3,640	3,600	8,000
Vermont	1,870	2,470	4,100	6,200
Wisconsin	10,410	14,780	13,500	36,500
Other States	4,380	5,300	7,000	14,800
Total	215,430	296,150	399,000	741,200

TOMATOES

State	Acreage		Production	
	1927	Revised 1928	1927	Forecast 1928
	Acres	Acres	Tons	Tons
Arkansas	17,820	19,600	53,500	54,900
California	28,760	23,880	178,300	174,300
Colorado	2,350	2,250	11,200	14,400
Delaware	15,000	13,500	76,600	52,600
Illinois	5,110	5,120	22,600	21,000
Indiana	42,990	49,870	163,400	199,500
Iowa	4,080	4,810	18,400	21,200
Kentucky	6,530	8,030	20,900	18,500
Maryland	34,410	22,710	161,400	90,800
Michigan	1,800	1,060	9,900	9,600
Missouri	19,440	18,700	38,900	52,400
New Jersey	28,000	31,920	145,600	152,200
New York	10,540	11,170	70,600	61,400
Ohio	10,000	10,400	45,000	54,100
Pennsylvania	3,740	5,240	18,700	21,500
Tennessee	8,450	10,220	24,500	27,600
Utah	5,200	4,900	48,400	56,400
Virginia	6,420	5,390	23,700	16,700
Other States	3,310	4,070	7,600	13,400
Total	283,850	253,540	1,131,000	1,107,500

According to the Bureau's report the condition of snap beans for canning on August 1, 1928, was 84 per cent, compared with 75 per cent on August 1, 1927, and a ten-year average of 80 per cent. The condition of sweet corn for canning was 84 per cent on August 1, 1928, as compared with 70 per cent on the same date last year, and a ten-year average of 78 per cent. The condition of tomatoes on August 1, 1928, was 80 per cent, as compared with 80 per cent on August 1, 1927, and a ten-year average of 78 per cent.

Truck Crop Markets

August crop reports increased considerably the production prospects for potatoes, sweet potatoes, peaches and apples, according to the U. S. Market News Service. The potato crop may be the heaviest ever grown. During July, production forecasts were lowered slightly for pears and grapes. Reduction also are indicated for late onions and cantaloupes, early fall cabbage and lettuce compared with the 1927 figures. Late watermelons and tomatoes will be more abundant than last season.

The commercial apple crop is now estimated at 33,277,000 barrels, or 7,300,000 more than in 1927. In spite of a reduction of half a million barrels during July, New York is still likely to have 50 per cent heavier production than last season. Virginia, Michigan and Illinois expect more apples than in 1927, but West Virginia not so large a commercial crop. Idaho is likely to show a sharp decrease from last year, but other northwestern states have heavier crops. The August estimate in four northwestern States together indicates a commercial crop of 38,406,000 boxes, compared with 30,822,000 in 1927.

The August forecast for pears is 23,279,000 bushels. It is expected that 14,864,000 bushels of the 1928 crop will be produced in Pacific Coast states. Total shipments increased during the week to 1,510 cars. Movement from California was decreasing and northwestern output gaining. New York and Colorado began shipping.

Combined shipments of 29 fruits and vegetables decreased during the week ended August 11, to 20,000 cars, because of much lighter forwardings of peaches, melons and potatoes. Prices of peaches and onions were advancing, potatoes began to decline again, but most other products showed little change.

The week's output of peaches dropped about half and totaled only 4,620 cars; forwardings from Georgia, Arkansas and California registered the greatest decrease, but North Carolina and Tennessee made gains. Peach movement has now started in Virginia, Maryland, Colorado and Utah. Prices showed general improvement, especially in the East. Total peach production estimates were increased by August to about 67,500,000 bushels, or fully 22,000,000 bushels more than last year. California now expects a huge total of 25,682,000 bushels.

CARLOT SHIPMENTS

Commodity	Aug. 5-11 1928	July 29 Aug. 4 1928	Aug. 7-13 1927	Total this season to Aug. 11	Total last season to Aug. 13	Total last season
Apples, total	672	964	661	4,939	3,415	93,219
Eastern states	285	541	377	2,674	2,530	44,502
Western states	384	423	284	2,265	885	48,717
Cabbage	218	195	224	18,098	16,269	39,035
Carrots	49	23	(a)	5,290	(a)	6,646
Cucumbers	66	145	134	9,112	7,341	8,175
Green peas	140	166	88	4,135	3,625	4,148
Mixed deciduous fruit ..	451	476	518	3,314	2,730	6,407
Mixed vegetables	667	538	781	23,203	23,460	35,945
Peaches	4,618	9,180	3,790	34,382	24,665	41,553
Pears	1,510	1,351	1,599	7,079	5,087	18,713
Peppers	37	63	22	2,627	1,920	2,824
Plums and prunes	117	118	144	3,257	2,592	6,983
String beans	21	12	11	5,931	5,402	6,481
Tomatoes	413	528	349	21,844	22,728	32,612

(a) Unavailable

Condition of Cabbage and Cucumbers

For the country as a whole the condition of cabbage for kraut on August 1, 1928, was 84 per cent, according to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Last year on August 1 the condition was 86 per cent, and the ten-year average for August 1 is 79 per cent.

The condition of cucumbers for pickles on August 1 for the country as a whole was 81 per cent, as compared with 76 per cent on August 1, 1927, and a ten-year average of 77 per cent for August 1.

In the following table the condition as given in the Bureau's report is shown, by States:

	Cabbage for kraut			Cucumbers for pickles		
	Aug. 1 1927	Aug. 1 1928	10-year Ave.	Aug. 1 1927	Aug. 1 1928	10-year Ave.
	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
New York	93	72	80	64	78	77
Ohio	93	91	76	69	89	75
Indiana	85	95	78	77	86	79
Illinois	85	95	81	68	80	77
Michigan	89	94	81	76	78	75
Wisconsin	84	79	79	80	84	77
Minnesota	87	89	77	73	86	73
Iowa .....	..	..	..	73	88	76
Missouri .....	..	..	..	79	83	78
Colorado	79	90	83	85	87	85
Washington	85	85	86	90	75	82
California .....	..	..	..	81	80	81
Other States	71	90	79	71	77	79
U. S. Average....	86	84	79	76	81	77

Weather and Crops

According to the Weather Bureau's report for the week ended August 14, the dry, warm weather throughout the North-western States was ideal for harvesting and threshing and these activities made rapid progress, while seasonal farm work in general advanced well practically everywhere west of the Appalachian Mountains. Except in the East and Southeast, very little rain occurred, and temperatures were generally favorable for good growth. Larger and more numerous areas are now needing moisture, however, than at any time during the current season, though no widespread damaging drought has yet appeared. The principal sections now needing rain comprise the lower Ohio and some adjoining parts of the central Mississippi Valley, the more northwestern States, the north-central and southern Great Plains, and more or less local areas in the Gulf region.

Considerable damage resulted to crops over rather extensive areas from New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania, southward over the interior of the Atlantic States to southeastern Georgia and Florida. High winds and excessive rainfall in these sections blew down much corn, washed fields, flooded lowlands, and stripped fruit from trees in many places, but, at the same time, some other sections, that had become dry, were abundantly supplied with moisture. Showers in parts of the Southwest, particularly in New Mexico and portions of Arizona, were helpful, but unirrigated crops still need rain in most sections west of the Rocky Mountains.

New Bulletin Issued

With this issue of the Information Letter there is mailed a copy of Bulletin No. 25-L, "Thermophilic Contamination in the

Canning of Peas and Corn," which is a report on a series of bacteriological field studies that were begun in the canning season of 1926 and carried through 1927. Any member failing to receive a copy of the bulletin is requested to advise the Association.

Frozen and Preserved Fruit in Cold Storage

Frozen and preserved fruits in cold storage on August 1 totaled 83,219,000 pounds, according to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. On the same date last year the amount in cold storage was 60,995,000 pounds.

Pea Pack Statistics Being Compiled

The collection of annual statistics on the pack of certain canned foods will be made this year by the Census Bureau in the same manner as last year. The Bureau has already sent out to pea canners the schedules on which to report their packs. Schedules for other products will be sent out later as the season for canning these products draws to a close.

To facilitate the work of the Census Bureau, and thereby make the complete statistics of the various packs available at the earliest possible date, canners are urged to fill out the schedules and return them to the Bureau as promptly as possible after their packs are finished.

Business Conditions

Measured by check payments, the dollar volume of business during the week ended August 11 was greater than in either the previous week or the same week in 1927, according to the weekly statement of the Department of Commerce. The wholesale price index was again lower than in the previous week, but still above a year ago.

Bank loans declined slightly from the previous week but were still higher than a year ago. Loans to brokers and dealers were slightly larger than a week ago and also larger than in the corresponding week of 1927. Interest rates on time money advanced to the highest point in seven years.

CAR LOADINGS

Period	Total	Miscellaneous	Merchandise	
			L.C.L.	Other
Week ended August 4	1,048,622	420,548	287,138	370,938
Preceding week	1,033,974	408,283	285,192	370,501
Corresponding week, 1927	1,024,038	391,535	289,564	372,336
Corresponding week, 1926	1,076,302	393,061	289,551	423,780

Industrial Employment in July

The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports a drop of 1.1 per cent in employment in July as compared with June, and a decrease of 3.1 per cent in pay-roll totals. The usual closing for

inventory taking and the season for repairs and vacations regularly cause a decline in employment and especially in pay-roll totals in July. The falling off in employment, however, was considerably less in July, 1928, than in the Julys of 1923, 1924, 1926 and 1927, and it was the same as in July, 1925.

Employment in July, 1928, was 3 per cent below the level of employment in July, 1927, and pay-roll totals were 1.9 per cent smaller.

Wholesale and Retail Prices in July

The general level of wholesale prices in July was approximately three-fourths of 1 per cent higher than in June, according to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Compared with July, 1927, an increase of nearly $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent is shown. Farm products as a group advanced about one-third of 1 per cent above the June level, and an increase of 2 per cent is shown for foods.

The retail food index issued by the Bureau shows for July 15, 1928, an increase of one-tenth of 1 per cent since June 15, 1928, and a decrease of a little less than one-half of 1 per cent since July 15, 1927.

Early Leader in Association's Work Passes Away

The death of James P. Olney, who passed away on Wednesday, August 15, recalls the early days of the organization of the National Cannery Association. Mr. Olney was most earnest in his effort to create such an organization, and it was due to him and some other leaders of like acumen and ability that the National Cannery Association not only came into existence, but developed to the present position it holds in the canning industry. The association's character and reputation of today largely reflect the views of its organizers, as their views have been carried on and on through the different administrations which have succeeded.

Mr. Olney, because of his innate modesty, refused time and again to accept any office in the association. He preferred to be in the background and that others should be in the forefront.

Probably his most notable contribution to the canning industry was his introduction of the resolution endorsing and approving the present Food and Drugs Act. This resolution was passed by the Atlantic States Packers Association, which was one of the predecessors of the National Cannery Association. A warm debate followed the introduction of this resolution championed by Mr. Olney, and to him should go great credit for the invaluable asset that the canning industry has had in being one of the industries which early urged the passage of a proper food law.